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NEWS PERSPECTIVE

Johnson Vs. Bundy: Each Is Waiting

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WASHINGTON.

White House foreign affairs adviser McGeorge Bundy has sent President Johnson a memo, informing him that he has received an offer to become president of the Ford Foundation, but so far the President's reaction has been total silence.

Informed sources said here yesterday that Mr. Bundy is quietly waiting for the President to call him "at his leisure" to talk about the matter.

Sources close to Mr. Johnson said, however, that "the next move is up to Mac," and that, rather than bring the subject up himself, the President is quietly waiting to hear from Mr. Bundy again.

This is the current status of what official Washington considers one of the really great cat-and-mouse games to be played here in recent years.

Mr. Bundy was offered the \$75,000-a-year job as head of the nation's wealthiest and most influential philanthropic organization early this month by its board chairman, John J. McCloy. His reply was that he would not know if he would be available until he had talked to Mr. Johnson. By that measure, he still does not know.

The unstated implication which has been widely drawn from this is that the former Harvard undergraduate dean is desirous, at last, of knowing whether Mr. Johnson has any long-range plans to appoint him eventually to some higher post within the executive branch.

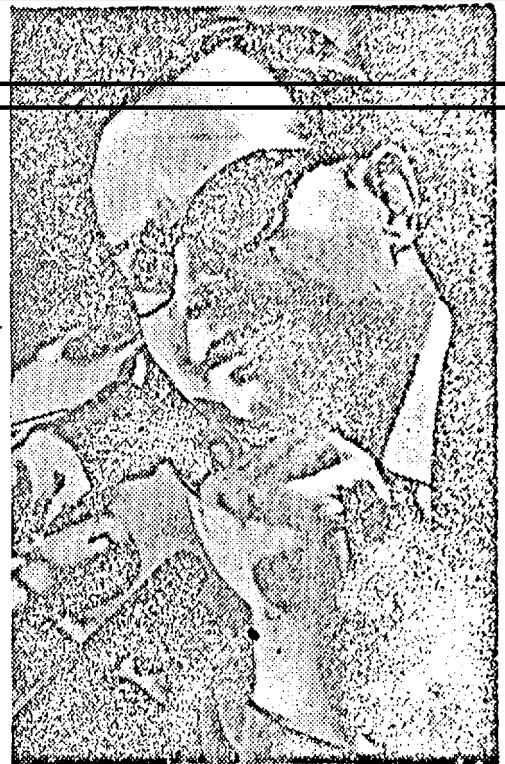
Both officially and unofficially, Mr. Bundy continued to maintain his own strict silence on the matter yesterday. He will not even confirm or deny that the offer has been made.

The impression he creates among his White House associates is that there is no need for any hurried decision or response from the President, who, after all, is a busy man.

Officially, the Texas White House continued to maintain its stated position that this whole Ford affair must not be very serious since Mr. Bundy has not yet seen fit to bring the matter for detailed discussion with Mr. Johnson.



McGeorge Bundy



Bill D. Moyers

WHOSE VOICE will be heard in the formation of U. S. foreign policy? Up to now, it's been the Cantabrigian tones of top Presidential adviser McGeorge Bundy, who may be leaving. High on the list of likely successors is Texas-accented Bill Moyers.

Unofficially, Mr. Johnson is said to believe that anyone of Mr. Bundy's talents and capacities who has given five years to public service ought to have the right now to decide on his own best course for the future.

Apparently, the impression the President now seeks to create is that he values Mr. Bundy greatly but his loss would not mean the end of the world.

Who would succeed him? His chief deputy, Robert Komer? Or his brother, Assistant Secretary of State William Bundy? Or White House press secretary Bill Moyers?

Mr. Komer is officially described as a "longtime government analyst," which means he used to work for the Central Intelligence Agency before he came to the White House.

White House sources yesterday said Mr. Johnson has been particularly impressed with Mr. Komer's handling of Israeli-Arabic affairs and with his "sharp" handling of domestic politics.

But Mr. Komer Lacks, Mr.

Bundy's prestige and would face a challenge in retaining all the authority the office currently possesses.

William Bundy is considered a lively prospect. Mr. Johnson admires his talents and Mr. Bundy is said to admire the job.

The betting is 50-50 on Mr. Moyers. Some sources said yesterday that Mr. Johnson, conscious of criticism that he lacks sophistication in foreign affairs, would hesitate to replace Mr. Bundy with a Texan. Besides, Mr. Moyers is said not to want the job.

Others say he does want it; that he would provide the "pipeline" the President needs between the White House and the agencies involved in foreign affairs, and that he lacks in expertise he makes up for in intuition and Presidential rapport.

At this point, no one believes that Mr. Bundy has made any final decision; neither does anyone believe that he is making an out-and-out choice. "He's still carding it down," one source said.

It is widely assumed in Washington that Mr. Bundy would not object to being Secretary of State one day. But people who know him say that he is not trying to force the President to give him that job tomorrow. Rather, it is some knowledge of Mr. Johnson's long-range intent he desires.

White House sources describe the relationship between the President and Mr. Bundy as "mutually respectful, proper, friendly, but never buddy-buddy."

In the end, no one doubts that the President will try hard to keep him.

Should Mr. Bundy leave the White House now, he will depart just as Mr. Johnson begins to turn more attention to U. S. relations with Western Europe—which is really the Bundy specialty.

Both West German Chancellor Ludwig Erhard and British Prime Minister Harold Wilson will visit the President in December, the French have a Presidential election, and the U. S. is to visit by Mr. Johnson to Europe next spring seems almost certain.